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Susan Nachtrieb
Water Quality Coordinator
4800 West 92nd Ave.
Westminster, Co.
80030

October 14, 1992

Dear Ms. Nachtrieb,

I am enclosing the final report concerning wildlife impacts attendant to the Standley Lake Protection project.

The report emphasizes the Preble's jumping mouse, but considers other wildlife as well. Please feel free to request further elaboration on the subject matter presented if you like. I would be happy to provide additional information if I can.

I enjoyed being of assistance to you. I hope we can work together again.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Stoecker

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WILDLIFE INVESTIGATIONS

FOR THE

STANDLEY LAKE PROTECTION PROJECT

Prepared for

THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER

by

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Animal Ecologist

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This report presents the results of wildlife investigations conducted on the properties associated with the Standley Lake Protection Project. The primary objective of these investigations was to conduct small mammal trapping in an attempt to capture the Preble's jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*). The Preble's jumping mouse is currently listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a Category 2 Species, which is a species that presently is neither threatened nor endangered but is under consideration for threatened status. A secondary objective of this study was to evaluate wildlife habitat in general, giving special attention to hawks and eagles.

THE PREBLE'S JUMPING MOUSE

Trapping was conducted in habitats that had the potential of supporting populations of jumping mice. These habitats were

considered to be moist meadows, and riparian areas with either shrubs or trees. Trapping occurred at seven locations in all: along the riparian of Woman Creek at Indiana Avenue; at the proposed Woman Creek Reservoir site; along Woman Creek near its confluence with Standley Lake; in moist meadow habitat near the confluence of Woman Creek and Standley Lake; along Church Ditch north of Standley Lake; near Mandalay Reservoir; and at the Downstream Energy Dissipation Pond below the Standley Lake dam. In all cases, trapping was performed using live traps baited with a commercial horse feed (mainly rolled oats). All trapping was conducted during July and August 1992.

No jumping mice were captured at any of the seven sampling locations during the course of these investigations. The species that were captured were predominantly prairie voles (*Microtus ochrogaster*), meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), and occasionally hispid pocket mice (*Perognathus hispidus*).

The failure to capture jumping mice in the project area is not surprising. Suitable habitats that are present--moist meadow and riparian areas--are not well developed or extensive. Most of these locations are disturbed, weedy, and have been fragmented by roads, farming, grazing, and various ditching and construction activities.

It should be mentioned that jumping mice may nonetheless occur in the project area even though none were captured. Preble's jumping mice were identified at several locations in a concurrent study performed by me on Rocky Flats. Potential habitat on the Standley Lake Protection Project site, however, is much less extensive and generally more disturbed than on Rocky Flats and therefore less likely to support this species. Based on these observations, it is my opinion that the likelihood of impacts occurring to jumping mice, or to jumping mice habitat, from the proposed project is insignificant.

OTHER WILDLIFE CONSIDERATIONS

In general, wildlife habitat within the project area is not of a particularly high quality. As mentioned above, most of the area has been disturbed by past agricultural and urban related activities. The best wildlife habitats in the near vicinity include Standley and Mower reservoirs, and the few stands of large cottonwood trees that occur along several drainages. The reservoirs attract large numbers of water birds, and their shorelines provide moist habitats for many species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The mature cottonwood trees along Woman Creek, Church Ditch, and at several other locations provide perching and nesting habitat for hawks and eagles, as well as nesting habitat for songbirds. Raptorial birds that commonly frequent the vicinity include red-tailed and Swainson's hawks during summer, and rough-legged hawks during winter. Bald eagles also occur in the vicinity during winter, attracted to the area by Standley Lake and by the numerous nearby prairie dog colonies. Ferruginous hawks, northern harriers, golden eagles, American kestrels, and prairie falcons are occasionally seen in the area as well.

Although Standley and Mower reservoirs and the stands of cottonwoods mentioned above are in the near vicinity of the proposed project, no degradation to these habitats are anticipated from either project construction or operation. Conceivably the proposed impoundments--Woman Creek Reservoir and the Downstream Energy Dissipation Pond--could provide habitat improvements beyond existing conditions. This would be realized if the shorelines of these impoundments develop substantial riparian vegetation, and if open water is present over much of the year.